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ABSTRACT

To test whether the number of times viewers watch a television program correlates positively with (1) original expectancy-value measures (EV)--expectations of pleasant outcomes--or (2) changes in EV measures of gratifications, 117 Australian boys in grade 7 were interviewed and given a questionnaire on their responses to specific television programs. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the degree they expected to laugh, relax, be thrilled, learn things, forget problems, see people they liked, see justice done, or view things they could later talk about when they watched a television program. They were then asked to rate the attractiveness of these outcomes. Results indicated a positive relationship between EV measures of gratifications from television programs and the tendency to watch those programs at a later time. More specifically, findings showed that mean EV ratings obtained from an early viewing increased with subsequent viewings of the program and that changes in EV ratings after viewing a program were positively associated with later viewing behavior. In addition, viewing interest was more likely to be maintained if gratifications were both highly expected and highly valued. (MM)

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Expectancy-Value Measures of Audience Uses and Gratifications for Media Content

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Recent research adopting a "uses and gratifications" perspective of mass media influence has focused on clarifying fundamental concepts (McLeod and Becker, 1981). Proponents and opponents of the approach do agree on one point - much of the research is plagued by conceptual confusion.

A key assumption of the uses and gratifications approach is that audience motives for attending to specific media content can be viewed as expressions of desire for gratifications from that content. Usually, but not always, these motives are labeled gratifications sought. Gratifications sought are said to be generated by an individual's social situation, their social-structural background and what has been termed "needs." Often, the literature makes no distinction between basic individual needs and gratifications sought. Further, as Palmgreen and colleagues have argued, an urgent problem is to conceptually distinguish between gratifications sought from media content and those gratifications actually obtained (Palmgreen, Wenner and Rayburn, 1980).

The current study views motives as generated by an individual's basic needs, their social-structural background and the social context in which media content is scanned. But of central concern here is another conceptual distinction - audience expectations about media content and possible outcomes.

While the literature suggests motives about media content may direct individual behavior, these motives are altered by an individual's assessment of the various means available to obtain satisfaction - to satisfy gratifications sought. This assessment involves what we term expectations.

McLeod and Becker (1981) define expectations as "rough probabilities of satisfaction assigned by the person to various behaviours." What results from this assessment of expectations is a choice. Watching a particular television program, for example, may be a choice as would not watching the program. Expectations are modified by past experiences with behaviors - or with similar behaviors.

Consistent with the contemporary formulation of the uses and gratifications approach (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974) it

is recognized that media-related behaviors are but one source of satisfaction among many many competing forces. Cost, ease of use or access to media content, time and competing leisure activities, as well as a host of other social variables, could be factors involved in such an assessment.[1]

The subjective evaluation by the audience member of what is satisfied by attending to specific media content is termed gratification obtained. Distinguishing between gratifications sought and obtained underscores the importance of the activeness of the audience, and the expectations an audience member has about attending to specific content (Palmgreen et al., 1980; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Kippax and Murray, 1980; Galloway and Meek, 1981; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982; Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1983).

An Expectancy-Value Approach

We have argued elsewhere (Galloway and Meek, 1981) that the basic assumptions underlying a uses and gratifications approach are generally compatible with expectancy-value theory. (Also see Van Leuven, 1981; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982; Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1983).

Expectancy-value theory (sometimes expectancy theory) is a broad cognitive theory of motivation which incorporates path-goal assumptions toward the prediction of behavior.[2]

The common concepts in various studies using expectancy-value theory (e.g. Atkinson, 1964; Vroom, 1964) are expectancy and valence. Expectancy is the probability that a specific behavior will lead to an outcome. Valence is the value or attractiveness of that outcome.

While expectancy and valence, or value, are central concepts, variations in approach and research design have distinguished between personality dispositions and situationally determined motives. Extrinsic variables that may impinge on the immediate choice-action also have been studied.

The common assumption in these approaches is the tendency of an individual to behave in a certain manner. Behavior depends upon the strength of expectations that the behavior will lead to an outcome (gratification) - interacting with the value or attractiveness of that outcome for the individual.

Thus we contend that the basic formulation of an expectancy-value approach can be meaningfully translated into a media-related behavior model. Such a model has a certain appeal because of its simplicity and its potential for use as a predictive tool, and the model gives emphasis to a neglected but central concept in uses and gratifications research - audience expectations.

Similar conclusions have been reached by Palmgreen and Rayburn in their recent research, although the operationalization of expectancy and valence is different from that proposed here.

Expectancy-value and uses and gratifications research both propose that behavior is guided by individual perceptions of the situation and attempts to gratify motives. Both approaches assume an active audience, and an audience member who is sufficiently self-aware to be able to report, or at least identify, gratifications sought from the media.

In addition, expectancy-value approaches assume that expectations about action to fulfill motives directed toward the media can be articulated if appropriately probed.

Uses and gratifications studies typically ask respondents their reasons for attending to particular media or specific media content. This procedure results in a "laundry list" of endorsed reasons. However, we do not know:

(a) whether these endorsements are gratifications sought from media prior to exposure or gratifications obtained after exposure, and

(b) whether these endorsemnets are expected outcomes from attending to the media and not valued by the audience member, or outcomes valued but not expected - or some combination of both.

In the context of media-related motives and exposure, the basic expectancy-value formulation is:

$$\text{Tendency to expose} = \sum E_i \cdot V_i$$

where: E_i is the strength of expectancy associated with the i^{th} gratification, V_i is the value or the attractiveness of the i^{th} gratification, and n is the number of gratifications.[3]

The tendency to expose to specific media content (or a particular medium) is thus indexed by expectancy-value (EV) ratings for that content or medium.

Thus there is a predictive aspect to the model. Media content is more likely to be attended to if gratifications consequent upon interaction with the media are both highly valued and highly expected. If expected but not valued, or valued but not expected, exposure is less likely to occur.

Secondly, there is a more process-oriented derivation which includes an assumption of over-time interdependence or reciprocal influence between media and audience.

An audience member for whom expected and valued gratifications are not well fulfilled following exposure will be less likely to attend to that source of media gratification at a subsequent opportunity.

Conversely, when expectations about valued gratifications are well fulfilled through media exposure there will be an increase in the likelihood of subsequent exposure.

These assumptions are consistent with the McLeod and Becker (1974) proposal for a transactional model of media influences which incorporates the uses and gratifications perspective (Also see Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1983; Kraus and Davis, 1978). In order to understand media influence, they argue, one must understand that in Bauer's (1964) words, communication is a "transactional process in which two parties each expect to give and take from the deal approximately equitable values." That is, <u>orientations</u> of audience members, as well as message characteristics and media exposure patterns, must be considered when assessing any possible influence.

Gratifications sought and obtained, and expectations, are the orientations of interest here.[4]

Further, this dynamic perspective is consistent with media practice. Promotion and publicity, for example, seem to us to be more directed toward audience expectations about future gratifications from exposure rather than evaluative dispositions about gratifications. Cognitive effects (in this case an agenda of gratifications) are generally more amenable to change than are shifts in affective or evaluative components of attitudes (in this case valences). (Also see McCombs, 1981).

Hypotheses

Based on the above concepts of expectancy and valence, two hypotheses are tested in this exploratory study:

H1: That expectancy-value measures (EV) of gratifications obtained at an early point in time for a specific television program will be positively associated with the number of times that program is later viewed.

H2: That changes in EV measures of gratifications obtained before and after viewing a television program at an early point in time will be positively associated with the number of times that program is later viewed.

Additionally, we examined whether a variable extrinsic to the model influenced these hypothesized relationships. This situational variable was the extent to which a respondent had control over the choice of program they watched. If viewing was a family affair, for example, then any path-goal behavior by the respondent consistent with the model might be thwarted. As noted earlier, extrinsic variables have been examined in expectancy-value formulations (e.g. "habit" in Atkinson's 1964 model).

Method

The sample comprised 12- to 13-year-old boys (all those in Year 7) at a high school in a Sydney, Australia, middle class suburb. Narrow age, sex and socio-economic constraints were placed on the sample to minimize variability in media use associated with differing demographic characteristics. At this stage of testing our explicitly predictive model (in contrast to post-hoc descriptive studies of uses and gratifications) we felt it important to be able to predict choice of television programs beyond the use of standard predictors such as demographic characteristics (see Kippax and Murray, 1977).

Questionnaires were administered in classrooms to 117 respondents. Each respondent was interviewed up to four times with the same questionnaire schedule, at the beginning of each week across four consecutive weeks. Hence, at each week a respondent could have different EV ratings and different exposure patterns for each of the television programs examined. Therefore, larger numbers of across-time observations were available than the number of respondents to examine the two hypotheses:

	Week Number	Number of respondents
A	1, 2	14
B	2, 3	2
C	3, 4	2
D	1, 2, 3	19
E	2, 3, 4	2
F	1, 2, 3, 4	78
		117

Two sets of data comprising over-time observations were constructed. Data relating to the first hypothesis came from all 117 respondents (A to F above) giving a total of 1145 week t to week t + 1 predictions over all four programs. Data relating to the second hypothesis required any three consecutive weeks of measures and came from 99 respondents (D to F above) giving a total of 700 "change" predictions over all four programs.[5]

Exposure: Measures were taken at each of the four interviews of the respondent's exposure to a specific television program. Respondents were asked whether they had watched any of the four competing programs shown at 7 p.m. Monday through Friday on the three commercial and one non-commercial television stations in Sydney. The programs were "The Doris Day Show," "Willesee at Seven" (an information-current affairs program), "The Odd Couple," and the "ABC National News" (the 30-minutes non-commercial nightly news broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission).

Longer term data on respondents' viewing patterns was not collected given the time constraints on interviewing in the classrooom.

Expectancy: Using procedures adapted from a work motivation study by Hackman and Porter (1968) respondents were given a list of 10 gratification items. These items were similar to those used in the Galloway and Meek (1981) illustrative study.

Respondents were asked their expectations about possible outcomes from viewing a television program. Seven-point scales were used with extremes labeled "very true" to "not at all" true. The items were repeated for each program.

The question asked respondents was: "If you were to watch (one of the four programs) you would expect (1) to have a good laugh

(2) to learn various new or interesting things (3) to get very involved with the program or people in it (4) to find the storyline or events thrilling or exciting (5) to learn how life really is (or was) in certain situations (6) to relax easily (7) to see people or characters you like, admire or find interesting (8) to see justice done (9) to get something you can talk about with others (10) to be able to forget for a while things you have to forget about."

Value: Seven-point scales were used to measure value or attractiveness (valence) usually associated with the respondents' viewing context with each of the 10 gratification items. Extremes were labeled "usually very important" and "usually not at all important." Respondents were asked: "How important to you, usually, is each of the following possible outcomes of watching television?" The statements that followed were exactly the same as those used for the expectancy measure.

The expectancy and value measures for each gratification item were then multiplied and summed across items to give expectancy-value (EV) scores for each program. Since both E and V scales were coded 0 to 6, the EV score for each of the ten items in relation to each program had a possible range of 0 to 36. That is, 0 to 360 for each program.

In summary, across the four waves there were respondents for whom measures were taken of expectancy-value of gratifications of viewing at time t, with measures of subsequent week (time t + 1) exposure available. For H2, the EV measures were collected at time t and time t + 1, with subsequent (i.e. time t + 2) exposure measures available.

Control over program choice: Respondents were asked: "In terms of your own viewing, how true is the following statement? I am usually allowed to choose what programs to watch around 7 o'clock on weeknights." A seven-point scale was used with extremes labeled "very true" and "not at all true." Scores on this scale were collapsed into two categories, "free" and "restricted" groups.

Results

H1: Table 1A shows mean expectancy-value ratings at time t (mean EV) by later viewing (i.e. at time t + 1). The mean EV rating for any particular program which was not later viewed was 103.8. The mean EV rating for a program which was later viewed once was 120.7; and the mean EV rating for a program which was later viewed twice or more was 149.2. Kendall's Tau for this relationship between EV ratings in one week and the (full range of) number of times the programs were viewed in the next week was .17, $p < .001$.

Table 1A shows also the same analysis for each program. With one exception ("Doris Day Show"), the EV ratings were found to have a monotonic relationship with the number of times the program was viewed during the following week. In most cases this monotonic pattern was obtained for 3, 4 and 5 times viewed but the sub-sample sizes are small. For three of the four programs, Kendall's Tau is significant, $p < .001$.

Table 1B shows the results of an analysis of variance for differences between levels of subsequent viewing on the mean EV ratings shown in Table 1A. Table 1B shows that, after controlling for Program and Control over program choice, there were significant differences between the mean EV ratings of one week by levels of television exposure in the next week ($F = 23.1$, $p < .001$). Further analysis using Bonferroni t-tests (alpha = .05) showed that each of the mean EV ratings differed significantly from each other.

As expected, Table 1B shows there was also a Program main effect ($F = 27.7$, $p < .001$)

Mean EV ratings varied from program to program: "Doris Day Show" 81.4; "Willesee at Seven" = 142.1; "The Odd Couple" = 121.7; "ABC National News" = 113.2. That is, for this sample, across the given range of gratification items outcomes were nearly twice as much expected and/or valued in viewing "Willesee at Seven" than in viewing "Doris Day Show." This is not a surprising result. More importantly, there was no significant interaction between Program and Television exposure. In other words, there was a consistent main effect for exposure regardless of program, or Control over program

choice.

With respect to Control over program choice, there was neither a main effect nor any interaction effects with television exposure - although the EV means did lie in the expected direction (restricted control = 109.4; free choice = 117.1).[6]

Thus we conclude that there is strong support for H1. It appears that an EV measure of uses and gratifications outcomes from exposure to a program (which attempts to assess whether these outcomes are both highly expected and highly valued) does provide significant over-time predictions as to whether and how often the programs will be subsequently viewed.

H2: Table 2A shows mean changes in expectancy-value ratings, before-to-after viewing a particular program, by later viewing of that program. Respondents who did not later view a particular program had an earlier mean change in EV for that program of 2.7. Respondents who later viewed once had an earlier mean change score of 11.5. The mean change for respondents who later viewed twice or more was 19.9. These means were in the hypothesized direction and Kendall's Tau for this relationship (across all levels of subsequent viewing) was .10, $p < .001$.

Table 2A shows also the same analysis for each television program. With one exception ("Willesee at Seven"), the mean change scores were related monotonically to the number of times the program was later viewed. However, weaker relationships were found than in the H1 analysis.

Table 2B shows the results of analysis of variance for differences on the mean changes in EV ratings between levels of subsequent viewing shown in Table 2A. After controlling for program and Control over program choice, there was a significant main effect for television exposure ($F = 3.6$, $p < .05$). Further analysis using Bonferroni t-tests (alpha = .05) indicated that the mean changes in EV ratings, although positive and monotonic, were not significantly different to each other. Only the mean change for no later viewing and later viewing twice or more was significant.

Table 2B shows also that no significant main effects were found for Program or Control over program choice. There were no

significant interaction effects.

H2 emphasizes interdependency between media and audience, and between gratifications sought by the audience and those obtained with reappraisals being reflected in EV ratings. It appears there is only moderate support for this hypothesis. While the means are in the hypothesized direction, there is only one significant main effect. Clearly, the relationships in H2 are much weaker than in H1.

Discussion

The results presented are congruent with the model. This first substantive test of the EV model indicates that a positive relationship exists between expectancy-value (EV) measures of gratifications from television programs and the tendency to expose to those programs at a later time.

More specifically, we found that mean EV ratings of programs at an earlier point in time increase with each level of subsequent viewing of the program.

The findings point also to changes in EV ratings before-to-after viewing a program being positively associated with still later viewing behavior. The mean changes in EV ratings increased montonically with each level of subsequent viewing. However, not all differences between the means were significant. Thus, it seems to this point, that the expectancy-value measure of gratifications as an outcome of viewing is a better discriminator of subsequent levels of viewing than is the use of change scores in expectancy-values.

The model states that media content is more likely to be attended to if gratifications consequent upon interaction with the media are both highly expected and highly valued. If expected but not valued, or valued but not expected, exposure is less likely to occur. These combined components also are assumed to be influenced by exposure - although this aspect receives only moderate support from the present study. Expected and valued gratifications which are not well fulfilled as a result of media interaction are likely to lead to a decrease in levels of subsequent exposure.

The notion of a transactional model of media influence

over time[7] includes assumptions about audience-media interaction, interdependency and reciprocal influence. For example, if EV ratings are correlated with changes over time in exposure, this assumes that audience members actively seek gratifications and structure their behavior accordingly. But it assumes also learning effects from media exposure on subsequent levels of expectancy-value in the audience - principally, we suggest, effects on expectancies more than on values (or valences). Certainly, this point and an expanded transactional model deserve future study.

Of course, expectancy-value approaches are not without problems. The model here uses a multiplicative rather than additive index and there is debate on the relative merits of each index. Another concern is measurement of the component scales.

The extrinsic variable, Control over program choice, appears to moderate the hypothesized relationships. This seems to fit the common sense notion that as audience members lose control over which programs they can attend to, EV ratings will be less effective predictors. However, the ANOVA results indicate that Control over program choice did not have a significant effect. Nevertheless this variable warrants further study. (Also see Palmgreen et al., 1980).

The measure of expectancy in the model assesses personal outcomes of media use. That is, expectancy is the subjective probability that viewing a television program will have a specific outcome for the respondent - perceived gratifications obtained. This differs from the Rayburn and Palmgreen (1983) approach. In that model, belief (after Fishbein), or expectancy, is the subjective probability that a media object possesses a particular attribute in the general sense.[8] (Also see Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982). The relationship between these two approaches has yet to be fully explored.

Table 1A

Mean Expectancy-Value Measures of Gratifications in Week t, by Number of times Program viewed in Week t + 1.

	Number of times viewed in subsequent week			
	0	1	2 or more	Kendall's Tau
ALL PROGRAMS	103.8	120.7	149.2	.17[a]
	(73.7)	(78.6)	(79.4)	
n	771	160	214	
"Doris Day Show"	79.5	64.7	114.2	.05
	(68.4)	(59.7)	(80.6)	
n	231	27	27	
"Willesee at Seven"	131.6	140.2	176.8	.14[a]
	(70.6)	(80.7)	(80.2)	
n	183	46	58	
"The Odd Couple"	108.5	129.9	143.7	.17[a]
	(77.4)	(70.2)	(79.0)	
n	157	53	75	
"ABC National News"	102.7	124.7	144.7	.18[a]
	(70.4)	(84.0)	(70.6)	
n	200	34	54	

[a] $p < .001$

Table entries are means. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. See method for discussion of n. The expectancy-value measures come from weeks 1, 2 and 3; the television exposure measures from weeks 2, 3 and 4 respectively in relation to the expectancy-value measures. Television exposure was collapsed into three categories. Kendall's Tau is calculated on the full range.

Table 1B

ANOVA for testing differences between levels of Television Exposure on Expectancy-Value scores, employing Program and Control over program choice as blocking variables

Source of variation	F	p
Television exposure	23.1	$<.001$
Program	27.7	$<.001$
Control over program choice	2.4	n.s.

Two and three-way interactions non significant.

Table 2A

Changes in Expectancy-Value Measures Before-to-After Having Viewed a Program in Week t, by Number of Times Program Viewed in Week t + 1.

	Number of times program viewed in subsequent week			
	0	1	2 or more	Kendall's Tau
ALL PROGRAMS	2.7	11.5	19.9	.10[a]
	(63.0)	(55.1)	(73.6)	
n	488	92	120	
"Doris Day Show"	4.6	9.2	38.9	.08
	(58.1)	(39.5)	(92.4)	
n	142	19	14	
"Willesee at Seven"	-1.1	9.1	7.3	.05
	(59.1)	(76.7)	(77.1)	
n	116	25	34	
"The Odd Couple"	7.6	9.8	28.6	.15[b]
	(73.8)	(42.2)	(80.8)	
n	103	29	43	
"ABC National News"	.1	19.7	12.6	.10[c]
	(62.8)	(55.7)	(41.4)	
n	127	19	29	

[a] $p < .001$; [b] $p < .01$; [c] $p < .05$

Table entries are means. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. See method for discussion of n. The expectancy-value change measures come from weeks 1 to 2 if a respondent had viewed a program in the interim, or similarly with respect to weeks 2 to 3; the television exposure measures come from weeks 3 and 4 respectively, in relation to the expectancy-value change measures. Television exposure was collapsed into three categories. Kendall's Tau is calculated on the full range.

Table 2B

ANOVA for testing differences between levels of Television Exposure on Change in Expectancy-Value scores, employing Program and Control over program choice as blocking variables.

Source of variation	F	p
Television exposure	3.6	$< .05$
Program	.9	n.s.
Control over program choice	.2	n.s.

Two and three way interactions non significant.

Notes

1. For a discussion of these factors see Kraus and Davis, 1978; McLeod and Becker, 1981.

2. The name expectancy-value (sometimes written E x V theory) is preferred by some writers (e.g. Atkinson, 1964); whereas others (notably work motivation theorists) prefer expectancy-valence or just expectancy theory (e.g. Lawler, 1973).

3. Multiplicative rather than additive combinations of the components appear most often in the literature, possibly for reasons of convention. Comparative analyses have been made without revealing startling differences (Hackman and Porter, 1968).

4. For a discussion of other orientations see McLeod and Becker, 1974; McLeod and Becker, 1981; McCombs, 1981.

5. Theoretical total observations were 1192 for H1 and 708 for h2. However, missing items of data reduced these totals to 1145 and 700 respectively.

6. A significant effect would be consistent with Palmgreen et al., 1980.

7. Whether weekly intervals (as used in the current study) represent a sufficient amount of time for significant reappraisals to occur and be reflected in EV ratings, is a question that needs further research.

8. Personal comments by Professor Philip Palmgreen on an earlier draft of this paper. Also see footnote 2, Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1983.

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